DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 284 112 CG 020 045

AUTHOR Alexander, Sheldon; And Others
TITLE Procedural and Distributive Justice Effects in Communal and Exchange Relationships.
PUB DATE Apr 87
NOTE 13p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association (Arlington, VA, April 9-12, 1987). For related documents, see ED 266 363 and CG 020 044-046.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College Students; Higher Education; Influences; *Interpersonal Relationship; *Justice; *Parent Child Relationship; Secondary Education; Secondary School Students; *Student Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS *Distributive Justice; *Procedural Justice

ABSTRACT

Previous justice research has used exchange situations, which involve expectations of reciprocity with no special responsibility for another's welfare, to compare the relative importance of procedural (fairness of rules and processes involved in reaching outcomes) and distributive (fairness of outcomes) fairness. Since differences were found as a function of social context, it was hypothesized that as the social context of an allocation moves from exchange to communal relationships, which involve feeling a special responsibility for another person's needs, the relative importance of procedural fairness will increase. To examine this issue, a simulation procedure involving a communal relationship was used. College students (N=114), high school students (N=120), and junior high school students (N=120), read a scenario in which parents allocated money to their teenage children, and then completed a questionnaire. Procedural and distributive justice were manipulated in a 2 x 3 factorial design; eight dependent measures of social and affective responses were examined. The results revealed that procedural justice accounted for significantly more variance than did distributive justice on all eight dependent variables. These findings differed from previous findings in exchange situations, suggesting that as allocator-recipient relations become closer, or more communal, procedural fairness becomes increasingly more important than distributive fairness. (Author/NB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED284112

PROCEDURAL AND DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE EFFECTS IN COMMUNAL AND EXCHANGE RELATIONSHIPS

Sheldon Alexander, Janet Bjornson, Sherry Cadle, Terry Russ, and Jerry Tolson

Wayne State University

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sheldon Alexander

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CG 020045

Presented at the annual meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association, Washington, D.C., April 9-12, 1987

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ABSTRACT

WHILE MOST PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS HAD DEALT WITH ISSUES OF DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE -- THE FAIRNESS OF OUTCOMES -- RECENT WORK HAS FOCUSED INCREASINGLY ON PROCEDURAL JUSTICE -- THE FAIRNESS OF THE RULES AND PROCESSES INVOLVED IN REACHING OUTCOMES.

WORK BY CLARK AND MILLS (1979) ON SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS HAS EMPHASIZED THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN COMMUNAL AND EXCHANGE RELATIONSHIPS. COMMUNAL OR CLOSE RELATIONS INVOLVE FEELING A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANOTHER PERSON'S NEEDS. EXCHANGE RELATIONS INVOLVE EXPECTATIONS OF RECIPROCITY, WITH NO SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANOTHER'S WELFARE. PREVIOUS JUSTICE STUDIES BY ALEXANDER & RUSS (1985), USING EXCHANGE SITUATIONS, COMPARED THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF PROCEDURAL AND DISTRIBUTIVE FAIRNESS AND FOUND DIFFERENCES AS A FUNCTION OF SOCIAL CONTEXT.

IT WAS HYPOTHESIZED THAT AS THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF AN ALLOCATION MOVES FROM EXCHANGE TO COMMUNAL, THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS WILL INCREASE. A SIMULATION PROCEDURE INVOLVING A COMMUNAL RELATIONSHIP WAS USED IN THIS STUDY. THE SOCIAL CONTEXT INVOLVED A FAMILY IN WHICH PARENTS ALLOCATED MONEY TO THEIR CHILDREN. PROCEDURAL AND DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE WERE MANIPULATED IN A 2 x 3 FACTORIAL DESIGN, EXAMINING EIGHT DEPENDENT MEASURES OF SOCIAL AND AFFECTIVE RESPONSES USED IN PREVIOUS RESEARCH (ALEXANDER & RUSS, 1985).

PROCEDURAL JUSTICE ACCOUNTED FOR SIGNIFICANTLY MORE VARIANCE THAN DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE ON ALL EIGHT DEPENDENT VARIABLES. THESE RESULTS DIFFERED FROM THE PREVIOUS FINDINGS IN EXCHANGE SITUATIONS. THE RESULTS SUGGEST THAT AS ALLOCATOR - RECIPIENT RELATIONS BECOME CLOSER, OR MORE COMMUNAL, PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS BECOMES INCREASINGLY MORE IMPORTANT THAN DISTRIBUTIVE FAIRNESS.

INTRODUCTION

Much of the previous psychological research dealing with justice or equity issues focused on distributive justice — the fairness of allocations or outcomes (e.g., Adams, 1965; Walster, Walster & Berscheid, 1978). Thibaut & Walker (1975) introduced the concept of procedural justice —the fairness of the rules and processes involved in dispute resolution in legal settings. Leventhal extended this to allocation decisions in nonlegal contexts, and there has been substantial recent work on the role of procedural justice (e.g., Alexander & Ruderman, in press; Folger & Greenberg,1985; Lind & Tyler in press; Tyler, Rasinski, & Griffin, 1986).

Most justice research, whether distributive or procedural, focused on institutional contexts, whether using simulation or real-life settings (e.g., school, employment, government). Recently there have been attempts to extend justice studies to a wider range of interpersonal situations (e.g., Barrett-Howard & Tyler, 1986). Walster, Walster & Berscheid earlier had discussed the role of distributive equity in intimate relations (1978), and recently Hatfield, Traupman, Sprecher, Utne & Hay (1985) presented a strong case for the importance of equity in close relations. They argued that distributive justice and injustice have an increasingly stronger effect, the closer the personal relationship between allocator and recipient (as in couple relationships) .

Work by Clark and Mills has emphasized the important distinction between communal and exchange relationships (Clark & Mills, 1979; Mills & Clark, 1982). Communal relationships involve feeling a special responsibility for another's needs (e.g., relations between friends, relatives, lovers). Exchange relations involve expectations of reciprocity or obligations to exchange outcomes with no special responsibility for another's welfare (e.g., business relations,stranger relations). A substantial body of evidence has developed in support of the functional significance of this distinction (Clark, 1985).

The present study attempts to relate the communal-exchange distinction to the comparative role of procedural and distributive justice in different types of allocation situations. On the basis of earlier studies using exchange relationships in college and employment contexts (Alexander & Russ, 1985), it was hypothesized that as the allocation context moves from exchange toward a more communal relationship, the relative importance of procedural justice will increase. That is, the closer the perceived relationship between an allocator and a recipient of an outcome, the greater the relative impact of process issues(i.e., procedural fairness) on social and affective responses. The present study utilized the communal relationship of parents and children to compare the relative importance of procedural and distributive justice.

PROCEDURE

The subjects were 114 college students, 120 11th and 12th grade students, and 120 7th and 8th grade students. There were 184 females and 170 males.

A simulation procedure derived from similar justice investigations using college class and work contexts (Alexander & Russ, 1985; Tyler & Caine, 1981) was used. Each subject read a scenario dealing with the allocation of resources. However, the allocation context was changed to a family situation in which parents allocated money to their teen-age children. Procedural fairness (PF) was varied by manipulating the fairness of the process by which the allocation decision was made. There were two PF levels: Fair and Unfair. There were three levels of distributive fairness (DF): Underreward, Just Reward, and Overreward. This yielded a 2 x 3 x 3 design (PF x DF x Age Level).

Each subject read a scenario which contained one PF and one DF condition. After the experimental treatment, the subjects responded to a 22 item questionnaire which included manipulation check items plus measures of eight dependent variables derived from previous research on distributive and procedural justice (Alexander & Ruderman, in press; Alexander & Russ, 1985).

The eight variables were: Evaluation of Parents, Satisfaction with the Family Situation, Perceived Conflict or Harmony, Turnover Intention, Trust in Parents, Tension/Anxiety, Anger, and Overall Fairnss of the Parents.

RESULTS

1. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the manipulation check items indicted that both the procedural fairness and the distributive fairness experimental treatments were effective ($p < .0001$ for both the PF and DF main effects). The procedurally fair condition produced greater perceptions of procedural fairness than the procedurally unfair condition. The Just Reward condition produced greater perceptions of distributive fairness than did the Underreward or Overreward conditions.

2. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was carried out for the eight dependent variables. The main effects were all significant ($p < .001$). Consequently, ANOVA was carried out for each of the dependent variables. Significant Procedural Fairness main effects ($p < .001$) were observed for all eight dependent variables (Table 1). Significant Distributive Fairness main effects ($p < .001$) were obtained for six of the eight dependent variables (Table 1). Distributive Fairness did not produce any significant differences on the Turnover Intention or Tension/anxiety measures. The third independent variable, Age level, yielded only one significant main effect. Junior high school students perceived more conflict in the situation than did the older subjects. None of the MANOVA results for the double or triple interactions were significant (and only two of the 32 possible ANOVA interactions were significant).

Multiple range tests were carried out to compare the cell means in the PF and DF conditions (Table 2). For all of the dependent variables, the procedurally fair condition produced a more positive response than the procedurally unfair condition (e.g., higher Evaluation of Parents, less Perceived Conflict, less Turnover Intention, less Anger, etc.). For the distributive fairness treatments, the

Underreward condition produced more negative responses on the six significant measures than did either the Just Reward or Overreward conditions.

3. A major purpose of this research was to compare the relative strengths of procedural fairness and distributive fairness in a communal relationship, as exemplified by a family situation. Because correlational approaches permit examination of the strength of a relationship (or the amount of variance accounted for), partial correlations were utilized.

One set of correlations was obtained between procedural fairness treatments and each dependent measure, with distributive fairness partialed out. Then distributive fairness was correlated with each dependent measure, with procedural fairness partialed out. All partial correlations were significant ($p < .0001$) for the relationships between Procedural Fairness and each of the eight dependent variables (Table 3). The partial correlations ranged from .30 to .65, with a median correlation of .52. For Distributive Fairness, the partial correlations were significant ($p < .015$) for seven of the eight dependent variables (Table 3). The distributive fairness partial correlations ranged from .02 to .39, with a median correlation of .20.

Each of the partial r's was transformed to a z coefficient. For each dependent variable, the significance of the difference between the z for Procedural Fairness and the z for Distributive Fairness was tested. Procedural Fairness was significantly greater ($p < .01$) than Distributive Fairness for each of the eight dependent variables (Table 4). That is, Procedural Fairness accounted for more variance than Distributive Fairness on each of the eight dependent measures.

DISCUSSION

Both the procedural fairness and distributive fairness treatments produced strong effects on the dependent variables. These results were obtained with four different types of dependent variables:

1. Affective responses (Tension/ anxiety, Anger).
2. Evaluation of allocator (Evaluation of Parents; Trust in Parents; Overall Fairness of Parents).

3. Responses to the social situation (Perceived Conflict/harmony; Satisfaction with Family Situation).

4. Behavioral intention to leave (Turnover Intention).

Procedural fairness influenced all four types of responses. Distributive fairness influenced all except behavior intentions. In addition, the results held up for all age levels used in this experiment—junior high school, senior high school, and college students.

However, the most striking aspect of the results is that the influence of procedural fairness was greater than that of distributive fairness in the case of <u>all</u> of the dependent variables. These findings within a family context show differences from the results obtained by Alexander & Russ (1985) using classroom and work situations. Within school and employment settings, distributive justice had either the same or a greater influence than procedural justice on several dependent variables also used in the present study (E.g., Anger, Turnover Intention, Job Satisfaction, Trust, Perceived Conflict). The differences between the results obtained for the three social contexts are shown in the chart below.

<u>PF Significantly Greater Than DF</u>

<u>College Class Context</u>	<u>Work Context</u>	<u>Family Context</u>
Evaluation of teacher	Evaluation of Supervisor	Evaluation of Parents
Overall fairness of teacher	Overall fairness of Supervisor	Overall Fairness of Parents
Tension/anxiety	Tension/anxiety	Tension/anxiety
	Perceived Conflict	Perceived Conflict
	Trust in Supervisor	Trust in Parents
		Satisfaction with Family Situation
		Turnover Intention
		Anger

DF Significantly Greater Than PF

Turnover Intention	Turnover Intention
Anger	Anger
Satisfaction with college class	

No Difference Between PF and DF

Perceived Conflict	Job Satisfaction
Trust in Teacher	

Great effort was taken to keep the stimulus structures in the three studies as similar as possible. The scenario structures used were virtually identical, except for the social context. The manipulations used in the three studies to vary procedural fairness and distributive fairness were very similar. The primary differences involved the allocator and recipient roles: Teacher-student; Supervisor-employee; Parents-children. While the difference in results could be due to unknown methodological differences, this appears unlikely.

The major distinction between the present study and the others is in the use of a communal situation. It would appear that as personal relationships become closer, or more communal, concerns about the fairness of an allocation process may become increasingly more important than concerns about the allocation outcome. This suggests the hypothesis that process variables may provide better indicators of the nature of a relationship than outcome variables, especially when fairness concerns are involved. The communal-exchange distinction developed by Clark and Mills appears to be a fruitful one for the study of justice issues.

Table 1
Summary of Analysis of Variance Results for
Procedural and Distributive Fairness Effects

	Procedural Fairness		Distributive Fairness	
Dependent Variables	F	P	F	P
Evaluation of Parents	93.63	<.001	7.35	<.001
Satisfaction with Family Situation	202.49	<.001	29.22	<.001
Perceived Conflict/Harmony	93.60	<.001	7.07	<.001
Turnover Intention	33.11	<.001	.10	--
Trust in Parents	122.49	<.001	9.44	<.001
Tension/Anxiety	136.81	<.001	2.50	--
Anger	267.81	<.001	33.25	<.001
Overall Fairness of Parents	215.20	<.001	35.99	<.001

Note: Degrees of freedom for Procedural Fairness = 1 and for Distributive Fairness = 2. Total N = 354

Table 2
Summary of Cell Means for Procedural and Distributive Fairness Efffects

	Procedural Fairness		Distributive Fairness		
Dependent Varuables	Fair	Unfair	Over Reward	Just Reward	Under Reward
Evaluation of Parents	9.78a	7.53b	9.09a	8.83a	8.07b
Satisfaction with Family Situation	11.03a	7.63b	10.17a	9.85a	8.05b
Perceived Conflict/ Harmony	10.04a	7.72b	9.06a	9.36a	8.30b
Turnover Intention	11.94a	10.53b	11.32	11.19	11.22
Trust in Parents	10.87a	8.23b	10.00a	9.87a	8.84b
Tension/Anxiety	5.83a	4.05b	5.15	4.97	4.74
Anger	6.06a	3.74b	5.06a	5.11a	4.14b
Overall Fairness of Parents	5.92a	3.89b	5.39a	5.27a	4.09b

Note: For each independent variable, means with different subscripts differ significantly at $p < .05$.
Higher values represent more positive or less negative responses.

TABLE 3

Partial Correlations of Procedural (PF) and Distributive (DF) Fairness with the Dependent Variables

	Procedural Fairness		Distributive Fairness	
Dependent Variable	r	p	r	p
Evaluation of Parents	.47	<.0001	.18	<.001
Satisfaction with Family Situation	.60	<.0001	.36	<.0001
Perceived Conflict/Harmony	.43	<.0001	.14	.005
Turnover Intention	.30	<.0001	.02	.38
Trust in Parents	.51	<.0001	.22	<.0001
Tension/Anxiety	.53	<.0001	.12	<.015
Anger	.65	<.0001	.39	<.0001
Overall Fairness of Parents	.61	<.0001	.37	<.0001

TABLE 4

Z Tests of Significance Comparing Strength of Procedural (PF) and Distributive (DF) Fairness Effects

Dependent Variable	Z_{PF-DF}	p
Evaluation of Parents	4.74	<.01
Satisfaction with Family Situation	4.30	<.01
Perceived Conflict/Harmony	4.22	<.01
Turnover Intention	3.83	<.01
Trust in Parents	4.52	<.01
Tension/Anxiety	6.21	<.01
Anger	4.98	<.01
Overall Fairness of Parents	4.20	<.01

REFERENCES

Adams, J.S.(1965). Inequity in social exchange. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), Advances in experimental social psychology, Vol. 2 (pp. 267-299). New York: Academic Press.

Alexander, S., & Ruderman, M. (In press). The role of procedural and distributive justice in organizational behavior. Social Justice Review.

Alexander, S., & Russ, T.L. (1985, August). Procedural and distributive justice effects: The role of social context. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Psychological Association, Los Angeles, CA.

Alexander, S., Tolson, J.M., & Ray, N. (1986, August). Procedural and distributive justice effects: The role of personal relationships. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C.

Barrett-Howard, E., & Tyler, T.R. (1986). Procedural justice as a criterion in allocation decisions. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 50. 296-304.

Clark, M.S. (1985). Implications of relationship type for understanding compatibility. In W. Ickes (Ed.), Compatibile and incompatible relationships (pp. 119-140). New York: Springer-Verlag.

Clark, M.S. & Mills, J. (1979). Interpersonal attraction in exchange and communal relationships. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 37, 12-24.

Folger, R., & Greenberg, J. (1985). Procedual justice: An interpretative analysis of personnel systems. In K. Rowland & G. Ferris (Eds.), Research in personnel and human resources management, Vol 3 (pp. 141-183). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Greenberg, J. (1986). Determinants of perceived fairness of performance evaluations. Journal of Applied Psychology, 71, 340-342.

Hatfield, E., Traupmann,J., Sprecher, S., Utne, M., & Hay, J. (1985). Equity and intimate relation: Recent research. In W. Ickes (Ed.), Compatible and incompatible relationships (pp. 91-117). New York: Springer-Verlag.

Leventhal, G.S. (1980). What should be done with equity theory? New approaches to the study of fairness in social relationships. In K. Gergen, M.S. Greenberg, & R.H. Willis (Eds.), Social Exchange (pp. 27-55), New York: Plenum.

Lind, E.A., & Tyler, T.R. (In Press). The social psychology of procedural justice. New York: Plenum.

Mills, J. & Clark, M.S. (1982). Exchange and communal relationships. In L. Wheeler (Ed.), Review of personality and social psychology, Vol. 3, (pp. 121-144). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Thibaut, J. & Walker, L. (1975). Procedural justice: A psychological analysis. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Tyler, T.R., & Caine, A. (1981). The role of distributional and procedural fairness in the endorsement of formal leaders. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 41, 641-655.

Tyler, T.R., Rasinski, K., & Griffin, E. (1986). Alternative images of the citizen: Implications for public policy. American Psychologist, 42, 970-978.

Walster, E., Walster, G.W., & Berscheid, E. (1978). Equity: Theory and Research. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.